

GEN. PHILLIPS

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# Soviet Heavy Bomber Output Runs Into Difficulties, Giving U.S. Unexpected Advantage

## Fear Felt News May Cause Undue Cuts by U.S.—Twining Confirms Gloomy Estimates of Soviet Strength in Other Air Categories.

By BRIG. GEN. THOMAS R. PHILLIPS, U.S.A. (Ret.)

Military Analyst of the Post-Dispatch.

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**I**N A STATEMENT prepared for the Senate Armed Services Committee Air Force Chief of Staff Nathan F. Twining, who is to succeed Adm. Arthur W. Radford as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Aug. 15, confirmed previous gloomy intelligence estimates of present and prospective Soviet air superiority.

He made one correction. This was to state that "the estimate today of present Soviet operational heavy bomber strength is lower than our estimate for this same period a year ago."

Although Twining did not say "The clarification by Twining so, other sources state that the of intelligence estimates is regarded as important. The press had seized on a statement by Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson that the United States over-estimated the Soviet Union's jet-bomber strength last year, and one news magazine called the appropriation for the Air Force of \$900,000,000 more than the Administration had asked for "a \$900,000,000 bobbie."

As a result of Soviet production difficulty, according to Twining, "our relative position is better right now than we expected it to be a year ago."

Twining said also that "we have reduced our estimates of the rate of Soviet heavy bomber build-up for the next two years."

"There is, however," he continued, "no change in the level of strength in modern bombers that we estimate the Soviets could, and probably will, provide for their long-range force in the time period beyond the next two years."

As a result of the acceleration of our own B-62 program and the reduction of the estimates of the rate of Soviet build-up for the next two years, Twining said: "Adding up the sum total of strategic striking forces (heavy bombers), the United States Air Force is still considerably stronger than the Soviets."

But, "during the coming years, the Soviets are expected to build up at a faster rate than the United States and we estimate that they could cut our lead appreciably." Here he was still talking about the strategic air force.

**Other Estimates Unchanged.**

There has been no change in the estimates of all other categories of air power. In other categories the United States is superior only in medium bombers, in all-weather interceptors, in both quantity and quality, and superior in transports but inferior in quality.

The change in intelligence estimates has also been used to attempt to discredit the Symington air power subcommittee findings and conclusions. The revisions, it is said, warrant only a change in one finding, namely: "The Soviet now has more heavy jet bombers than the United States and is producing these bombers at a faster rate."

This finding was based on the testimony of expert witnesses who had access to national intelligence estimates. This was thought to be the case a year ago and is not, but it easily can be true in a few years if the United States lets its guard down, it is argued.

Twining's statement was not all good news. The Russians are producing not one, but two heavy bombers, the four-engined Bison comparable, although not as good, to our B-52, and the prop-jet Bear. This latter has a far greater range than the Soviet Bison or the United States B-52.

"From this standpoint," Twining said, "the Bear is even more of a threat than the Bison." The Bear is intercontinental without refueling and is the longest range and most powerful turbo-jet airplane in existence.

**Strength in Other Bombers.**

The United States retains its leadership in the jet medium bomber, but, Twining said, the lead "will diminish as the Badger medium jet bomber comes into the Soviet inventory."

In light, or tactical bombers, Twining declared that "here the Soviets have held and will continue to hold a very great numerical advantage."

"The same is true," he maintained, "in comparable types of day fighters and fighter bombers."

Twining's statement discussed the great advantage our overseas bases give us over the Soviet Union, the superior skill of the Strategic Air Command and its wartime experience, our defensive advantage geographically and the United States progress in missiles of all types.

These very real assets are often passed over by military spokesmen trying to get funds.

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